This is the diary of a young woman from Baghdad, from a few days before the USA launched its attack on Iraq to the start of the US/UK occupation of Iraq. The topical nature of the diary provides some interest, as well as its perspective ie not that of the Western media, but of an Iraqi, someone on the ground. Thura wants us to see Iraq and Iraqis as they are, in the interests of promoting lasting peace and understanding between her country and the countries she admires - the UK and USA. It is perhaps this desire which makes Thura present us with such an anodyne account of her and her family's time 'under fire'. Or perhaps it is that Thura's relatively privileged background sheltered her so well from the most horrific aspects of war, that she doesn't have such knowledge or experience to diarize. Or perhaps it is that Thura is such a well brought up young woman that she thinks it would be nasty to mention the less attractive aspects of living in a city being bombed, then occupied by hostile strangers toting guns. Thura's account doesn't ring true as typical of Iraqis' experience of the war. In that sense, it lacks authenticity. In the sense too, of its seeming so contrived. So self-conscious of its potential readership in the UK and USA. So written to order for the nice publishers and nice media people waiting to rush the diary onto shelves and TV before guns have killed the last Iraqi child or made it parentless, homeless, or foodless. It's not that I wish Thura's family to have suffered the terrible things that happen to people during war - destruction of their homes, deprivation of food, water, clothes or medicine. But it's hard, knowing how many families have suffered thus, to empathise with one which - barring the loss of one family friend - at worst suffered the absence of TV and telephone and was even able to secure several months' supply of medicine for a diabetic and a fridge to keep it in. Thura writes withot any real passion about the situation of her country and people. There's no outrage at the looting of a hospital, just a sense of her thinking 'that's really not nice'. There's no mighty relief at escape to the idyllic countryside, just a sense, of Thura thinking 'this is really nice', having all the comforts of home, barring their own bathroom. Even the people around her don't get particularly upset, aside from being worried about one another now and then. Mother doesn't scream, cry or rage. Dad doesn't. Gran doesn't. No-one does. They just go on. Thura's Diary doesn't present her life, emotions, thoughts, warts and all. In that sense, it is not so much diary as bland report.